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Status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with operative paragraph 5 of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1990/74, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission on Human Rights the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s, adopted by the World Summit for Children at New York on 30 September 1990 (see annex).

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ANNEX

WORLD DECLARATION ON THE SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

AND

PLAN OF ACTION FOR IMPLEMENTING THE WORLD DECLARATION ON THE SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN THE 1990s

WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
30 September 1990

READEX

WORLD DECLARATION ON THE SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

1. We have gathered at the World Summit for Children to undertake a joint commitment and to make an urgent universal appeal—to give every child a better future.

2. The children of the world are innocent, vulnerable and dependent. They are also curious, active and full of hope. Their time should be one of joy and peace, of playing, learning and growing. Their future should be shaped in harmony and co-operation. Their lives should mature, as they broaden their perspectives and gain new experiences.

3. But for many children, the reality of childhood is altogether different.

The challenge

4. Each day, countless children around the world are exposed to dangers that hamper their growth and development. They suffer immensely as casualties of war and violence; as victims of racial discrimination, apartheid, aggression, foreign occupation and annexation; as refugees and displaced children, forced to abandon their homes and their roots; as disabled; or as victims of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.

5. Each day, millions of children suffer from the scourges of poverty and economic crisis—from hunger and homelessness, from epidemics and illiteracy, from degradation of the environment. They suffer from the grave effects of the problems of external indebtedness and also from the lack of sustained and sustainable growth in many developing countries, particularly the least developed ones.

6. Each day, 40,000 children die from malnutrition and disease, including acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), from the lack of clean water and inadequate sanitation and from the effects of the drug problem.

7. These are challenges that we, as political leaders, must meet.

The opportunity

8. Together, our nations have the means and the knowledge to protect the lives and to diminish enormously the suffering of children, to promote the full development of their human potential and to make them aware of their needs, rights and opportunities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a new opportunity to make respect for children's rights and welfare truly universal.

9. Recent improvements in the international political climate can facilitate this task. Through international co-operation and solidarity it should now be possible to achieve concrete results in many fields—to revitalize economic growth and development, to protect the environment, to prevent the spread of fatal and crippling diseases and to achieve greater social and economic justice. The current moves towards disarmament also mean that significant resources could be released for purposes other than military ones. Improving the well-being of children must be a very high priority when these resources are reallocated.

The task

10. Enhancement of children's health and nutrition is a first duty, and also a task for which solutions are now within reach. The lives of tens of thousands of boys and girls can be saved every day, because the causes of their death are readily preventable. Child and infant mortality is unacceptably high in many parts of the world, but can be lowered dramatically with means that are already known and easily accessible.

11. Further attention, care and support should be accorded to disabled children, as well as to other children in very difficult circumstances.

12. Strengthening the role of women in general and ensuring their equal rights will be to the advantage of the world's children. Girls must be given equal treatment and opportunities from the very beginning.

13. At present, over 100 million children are without basic schooling, and two-thirds of them are girls. The provision of basic education and literacy for all are among the most important contributions that can be made to the development of the world's children.

14. Half a million mothers die each year from causes related to childbirth. Safe motherhood must be promoted in all possible ways. Emphasis must be placed on responsible planning of family size and on child spacing. The family, as a fundamental group and natural environment for the growth and well-being of children, should be given all necessary protection and assistance.

15. All children must be given the chance to find their identity and realize their worth in a safe and supportive environment, through families and other care-givers committed to their welfare. They must be prepared for responsible life in a free society. They should, from their early years, be encouraged to participate in the cultural life of their societies.

16. Economic conditions will continue to influence greatly the fate of children, especially in developing nations. For the sake of the future of all children, it is urgently necessary to ensure or reactivate sustained and sustainable economic growth and development in all countries and also to continue to give urgent attention to an early, broad and durable solution to the external debt problems facing developing debtor countries.

17. These tasks require a continued and concerted effort by all nations, through national action and international co-operation.

The commitment

18. The well-being of children requires political action at the highest level. We are determined to take that action.

19. We ourselves hereby make a solemn commitment to give high priority to the rights of children, to their survival and to their protection and development. This will also ensure the well-being of all societies.

20. We have agreed that we will act together, in international co-operation, as well as in our respective countries. We now commit ourselves to the following 10-point programme to protect the rights of children and to improve their lives:

    (1) We will work to promote earliest possible ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Programmes to encourage information about children's rights should be launched world-wide, taking into account the distinct cultural and social values in different countries.

    (2) We will work for a solid effort of national and international action to enhance children's health, to promote pre-natal care and to lower infant and child mortality in all countries and among all peoples. We will promote the provision of clean water in all communities for all their children, as well as universal access to sanitation.

    (3) We will work for optimal growth and development in childhood, through measures to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and famine, and thus to relieve millions of children of tragic sufferings in a world that has the means to feed all its citizens.

    (4) We will work to strengthen the role and status of women. We will promote responsible planning of family size, child spacing, breastfeeding and safe motherhood.

(5) We will work for respect for the role of the family in providing for children and will support the efforts of parents, other care-givers and communities to nurture and care for children, from the earliest stages of childhood through adolescence. We also recognize the special needs of children who are separated from their families.

(6) We will work for programmes that reduce illiteracy and provide educational opportunities for all children, irrespective of their background and gender; that prepare children for productive employment and lifelong learning opportunities, i. e. through vocational training; and that enable children to grow to adulthood within a supportive and nurturing cultural and social context.

(7) We will work to ameliorate the plight of millions of children who live under especially difficult circumstances—as victims of apartheid and foreign occupation; orphans and street children and children of migrant workers; the displaced children and victims of natural and man-made disasters; the disabled and the abused, the socially disadvantaged and the exploited. Refugee children must be helped to find new roots in life. We will work for special protection of the working child and for the abolition of illegal child labour. We will do our best to ensure that children are not drawn into becoming victims of the scourge of illicit drugs.

(8) We will work carefully to protect children from the scourge of war and to take measures to prevent further armed conflicts, in order to give children everywhere a peaceful and secure future. We will promote the values of peace, understanding and dialogue in the education of children. The essential needs of children and families must be protected even in times of war and in violence-ridden areas. We ask that periods of tranquillity and special relief corridors be observed for the benefit of children, where war and violence are still taking place.

(9) We will work for common measures for the protection of the environment, at all levels, so that all children can enjoy a safer and healthier future.

(10) We will work for a global attack on poverty, which would have immediate benefits for children's welfare. The vulnerability and special needs of the children of the developing countries, and in particular the least developed ones, deserve priority. But growth and development need promotion in all States, through national action and international co-operation. That calls for transfers of appropriate additional resources to developing countries as well as improved terms of trade, further trade liberalization and measures for debt relief. It also implies structural adjustments that promote world economic growth, particularly in developing countries, while ensuring the well-being of the most vulnerable sectors of the populations, in particular the children.

The next steps

21. The World Summit for Children has presented us with a challenge to take action. We have agreed to take up that challenge.

22. Among the partnerships we seek, we turn especially to children themselves. We appeal to them to participate in this effort.

23. We also seek the support of the United Nations system, as well as other international and regional organizations, in the universal effort to promote the well-being of children. We ask for greater involvement on the part of non-governmental organizations, in complementing national efforts and joint international action in this field.

24. We have decided to adopt and implement a Plan of Action, as a framework for more specific national and international undertakings. We appeal to all our colleagues to endorse that Plan. We are prepared to make available the resources to meet these commitments, as part of the priorities of our national plans.

25. We do this not only for the present generation, but for all generations to come. There can be no task nobler than giving every child a better future.

New York, 30 September 1990

PLAN OF ACTION FOR IMPLEMENTING THE WORLD DECLARATION ON THE SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN THE 1990s

I. INTRODUCTION

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- Action at the national level
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- Goals for children and development in the 1990s

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This Plan of Action is intended as a guide for national Governments, international organizations, bilateral aid agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and all other sectors of society in formulating their own programmes of action for ensuring the implementation of the Declaration of the World Summit for Children.

2. The needs and problems of children vary from country to country, and indeed from community to community. Individual countries and groups of countries, as well as international, regional, national and local organizations, may use this Plan of Action to develop their own specific programmes in line with their needs, capacity and mandates. However, parents, elders and leaders at all levels throughout the world have certain common aspirations for the well-being of their children. This Plan of Action deals with these common aspirations, suggesting a set of goals and targets for children in the 1990s, strategies for reaching those goals and commitments for action and follow-up measures at various levels.

3. Progress for children should be a key goal of overall national development. It should also form an integral part of the broader international development strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. As today's children are the citizens of tomorrow's world, their survival, protection and development is the prerequisite for the future development of humanity. Empowerment of the younger generation with knowledge and resources to meet their basic human needs and to grow to their full potential should be a primary goal of national development. As their individual development and social contribution will shape the future of the world, investment in children's health, nutrition and education is the foundation for national development.

4. The aspirations of the international community for the well-being of children are best reflected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989. This Convention sets universal legal standards for the protection of children against neglect, abuse and exploitation, as well as guaranteeing to them their basic human rights, including survival, development and full participation in social, cultural, educational and other endeavours necessary for their individual growth and well-being. The Declaration of the World Summit calls on all Governments to promote earliest possible ratification and implementation of the Convention.

5. In the past two years, a set of goals for children and development in the 1990s has been formulated in several international forums attended by virtually all Governments, relevant United Nations agencies and major NGOs. In support of these goals and in line with the growing international consensus in favour of greater attention to the human dimension of development in the 1990s, this Plan of Action calls for concerted national action and international co-operation to strive for the achievement, in all countries, of the following major goals for the survival, protection and development of children by the year 2000.

   (a) Reduction of 1990 under-5 child mortality rates by one third or to a level of 70 per 1,000 live births, whichever is the greater reduction;

   (b) Reduction of maternal mortality rates by half of 1990 levels;

   (c) Reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by one half of 1990 levels;

   (d) Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal;

   (e) Universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school age children;

   (f) Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country), with emphasis on female literacy;

   (g) Protection of children in especially difficult circumstances, particularly in situations of armed conflicts.

6. A list of more detailed sectoral goals and specific actions which would enable the attainment of the above major goals can be found in the appendix to this Plan of Action. These goals will first need to be adapted to the specific realities of each country in terms of phasing, priorities, standards and availability of resources. The strategies for the achievement of the goals may also vary from country to country. Some countries may wish to add other development goals that are uniquely important and relevant for their specific country situation. Such adaptation of the goals is of crucial importance to ensure their technical validity, logistical feasibility, financial affordability and to secure political commitment and broad public support for their achievement.

II. SPECIFIC ACTIONS FOR CHILD SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

7. Within the context of these overall goals, there are promising opportunities for eradicating or virtually eliminating age-old diseases that have afflicted tens of millions of children for centuries and for improving the quality of life of generations to come. Achievement of these goals would also contribute to lowering population growth, as sustained decline in child death rates towards the level at which parents become confident that their first children will survive is, with some time lag, followed by even greater reduction in child

births. To seize these opportunities the Declaration of the World Summit for Children calls for specific actions in the following areas:

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

8. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, contains a comprehensive set of international legal norms for the protection and well-being of children. All Governments are urged to promote earliest possible ratification of the Convention, where it has not already been ratified. Every possible effort should be made in all countries to disseminate the Convention and, wherever it has already been ratified, to promote its implementation and monitoring.

Child health

9. Preventable childhood diseases—such as measles, polio, tetanus, tuberculosis, whooping cough and diphtheria, against which there are effective vaccines, and diarrhoeal diseases, pneumonia and other acute respiratory infections that can be prevented or effectively treated through relatively low-cost remedies—are currently responsible for the great majority of the world's 14 million deaths of children under 5 years and disability of millions more every year. Effective action can and must be taken to combat these diseases by strengthening primary health care and basic health services in all countries.

10. Besides these readily preventable or treatable diseases and some others, such as malaria, which have proved more difficult to combat, children today are faced with the new spectre of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic. In the most seriously affected countries HIV/AIDS threatens to offset the gains of child survival programmes. It is already a major drain on limited public health resources needed to support other priority health services. The consequences of HIV/AIDS go well beyond the suffering and death of the infected child and include risks and stigmas that affect parents and siblings and the tragedy of "AIDS orphans". There is an urgent need to ensure that programmes for the prevention and treatment of AIDS, including research on possible vaccines and cures that can be applicable in all countries and situations, and massive information and education campaigns, receive a high priority for both national action and international co-operation.

11. A major factor affecting the health of children as well as adults is the availability of clean water and safe sanitation. These are not only essential for human health and well-being, but also contribute greatly to the emancipation of women from the drudgery that has a pernicious impact on children, especially girls. Progress in child health is unlikely to be sustained if one third of the developing world's children remain without access to clean drinking water and half of them without adequate sanitary facilities.

12. Based on the experience of the past decade, including the many innovations in simple, low-cost techniques and technologies to provide clean water and safe sanitary facilities in rural areas and urban shanty towns, it is now desirable as well as feasible, through concerted national action and international co-operation, to aim at providing all the world's children with universal access to safe drinking water and sanitary means of excreta disposal by the year 2000. An important related benefit of universal access to water and sanitation combined with health education will be the control of many water-borne diseases, among them elimination of guinea-worm disease (dracunculiasis), which currently afflicts some 10 million children in parts of Africa and Asia.

Food and nutrition

13. Hunger and malnutrition in their different forms contribute to about half of the deaths of young children. More than 20 million children suffer from severe malnutrition, 150 million are underweight and 350 million women suffer from nutritional anaemia. Improved nutrition requires (a) adequate household food security, (b) healthy environment and control of infections and (c) adequate maternal and child care. With the right policies, appropriate institutional arrangements and political priority, the world is now in a position to feed all the world's children and to overcome the worst forms of malnutrition, i.e. drastically to reduce diseases that contribute to malnutrition, to halve protein-energy malnutrition, virtually to eliminate vitamin A deficiency and iodine deficiency disorders and to reduce nutritional anaemia significantly.

14. For the young child and the pregnant woman, provision of adequate food during pregnancy and lactation; promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices, including frequent feeding; growth monitoring with appropriate follow-up actions; and nutritional surveillance are the most essential needs. As the child grows older, and for the adult population as a whole, an adequate diet is an obvious human priority. Meeting this need requires employment and income-generating opportunities, dissemination of knowledge and supporting services to increase food production and distribution. These are key actions within broader national strategies to combat hunger and malnutrition.

Role of women, maternal health and family planning

15. Women in their various roles play a critical part in the well-being of children. The enhancement of the status of women and their equal access to education, training, credit and other extension services constitute a valuable contribution to a nation's social and economic development. Efforts for the enhancement of women's status and their role in development must begin with the girl child. Equal opportunity should be provided for the girl child to benefit from the health, nutrition, education and other basic services to enable her to grow to her full potential.

16. Maternal health, nutrition and education are important for the survival and well-being of women in their own right and are key determinants of the health and well-being of the child in early infancy. The causes of the high rates of infant mortality, especially neonatal mortality, are linked to untimely pregnancies, low birth weight and pre-term births, unsafe delivery, neonatal tetanus, high fertility rates, etc. These are also major risk factors for maternal mortality claiming the lives of 500,000 young women each year and resulting in ill-health and suffering for many millions more. To redress this tragedy, special attention should be given to health, nutrition and education of women.

17. All couples should have access to information on the importance of responsible planning of family size and the many advantages of child spacing to avoid pregnancies that are too early, too late, too many or too frequent. Pre-natal care, clean delivery, access to referral facilities in complicated cases, tetanus toxoid vaccination and prevention of anaemia and other nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy are other important interventions to ensure safe motherhood and a healthy start in life for the newborn. There is an added benefit of promoting maternal and child health programmes and family planning together in that, acting synergistically, these activities help accelerate the reduction of both mortality and fertility rates, and contribute more to lowering rates of population growth than either type of activity alone.

Role of the family

18. The family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children from infancy to adolescence. Introduction of children to the culture, values and norms of their society begins in the family. For the full and harmonious development of their personality, children should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. Accordingly, all institutions of society should respect and support the efforts of parents and other care-givers to nurture and care for children in a family environment.

19. Every effort should be made to prevent the separation of children from their families. Whenever children are separated from their family owing to force majeur or in their own best interest, arrangements should be made for appropriate alternative family care or institutional placement, due regard being paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing in his or her own cultural milieu. Extended families, relatives and community institutions should be given support to help to meet the special needs of orphaned, displaced and abandoned children. Efforts must be made to ensure that no child is treated as an outcast from society.

Basic education and literacy

20. The international community, including virtually all the Governments of the world, have undertaken a commitment at the World Conference on Education for All at Jomtien, Thailand, to increase significantly educational opportunity

for over 100 million children and nearly 1 billion adults, two thirds of them girls and women, who at present have no access to basic education and literacy. In fulfilment of that commitment, specific measures must be adopted for (a) the expansion of early childhood development activities, (b) universal access to basic education, including completion of primary education or equivalent learning achievement by at least 80 per cent of the relevant school-age children with emphasis on reducing the current disparities between boys and girls, (c) the reduction of adult illiteracy by half, with emphasis on female literacy, (d) vocational training and preparation for employment and (e) increased acquisition of knowledge, skills and values through all educational channels, including modern and traditional communication media, to improve the quality of life of children and families.

21. Besides its intrinsic value for human development and improving the quality of life, progress in education and literacy can contribute significantly to improvement in maternal and child health, in protection of the environment and in sustainable development. As such, investment in basic education must be accorded a high priority in national action as well as international co-operation.

Children in especially difficult circumstances

22. Millions of children around the world live under especially difficult circumstances—as orphans and street children, as refugees or displaced persons, as victims of war and natural and man-made disasters, including such perils as exposure to radiation and dangerous chemicals, as children of migrant workers and other socially disadvantaged groups, as child workers or youth trapped in the bondage of prostitution, sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation, as disabled children and juvenile delinquents and as victims of apartheid and foreign occupation. Such children deserve special attention, protection and assistance from their families and communities and as part of national efforts and international co-operation.

23. More than 100 million children are engaged in employment, often heavy and hazardous and in contravention of international conventions which provide for their protection from economic exploitation and from performing work that interferes with their education and is harmful to their health and full development. With this in mind, all States should work to end such child-labour practices and see how the conditions and circumstances of children in legitimate employment can be protected to provide adequate opportunity for their healthy upbringing and development.

24. Drug abuse has emerged as a global menace to very large numbers of young people and, increasingly, children—including permanent damage incurred in the pre-natal stages of life. Concerted action is needed by Governments and intergovernmental agencies to combat illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to

counter this tragedy. Equally important is community action and education, which are vitally needed to curb both the supply of and the demand for illicit drugs. Tobacco and alcohol abuse are also problems requiring action, especially preventive measures and education among young people.

Protection of children during armed conflicts

25. Children need special protection in situations of armed conflict. Recent examples in which countries and opposing factions have agreed to suspend hostilities and adopt special measures such as "corridors of peace" to allow relief supplies to reach women and children and "days of tranquillity" to vaccinate and to provide other health services for children and their families in areas of conflict need to be applied in all such situations. Resolution of a conflict need not be a prerequisite for measures explicitly to protect children and their families to ensure their continuing access to food, medical care and basic services, to deal with trauma resulting from violence and to exempt them from other direct consequences of violence and hostilities. To build the foundation for a peaceful world where violence and war will cease to be acceptable means for settling disputes and conflicts, children's education should inculcate the values of peace, tolerance, understanding and dialogue.

Children and the environment

26. Children have the greatest stake in the preservation of the environment and its judicious management for sustainable development as their survival and development depends on it. The child survival and development goals proposed for the 1990s in this Plan of Action seek to improve the environment by combating disease and malnutrition and promoting education. These contribute to lowering death rates as well as birth rates, improved social services, better use of natural resources and, ultimately, to the breaking of the vicious cycle of poverty and environmental degradation.

27. With their relatively low use of capital resources and high reliance on social mobilization, community participation and appropriate technology, the programmes designed to reach the child-related goals of the 1990s are highly compatible with and supportive of environmental protection. The goals for the survival, protection and development of children as enunciated in this Plan of Action should therefore be seen as helping to protect and preserve the environment. Still more action is needed, of course, to prevent the degradation of the environment in both the industrialized and the developing countries, through changes in the wasteful consumption patterns of the affluent and by helping to meet the necessities of survival and development of the poor. Programmes for children that not only help to meet their basic needs but which inculcate in them respect for the natural environment with the diversity of life that it sustains and its beauty and resourcefulness that enhance the quality of human life, must figure prominently in the world's environmental agenda.

Alleviation of poverty and revitalization of economic growth

28. Achievement of child related goals in the areas of health, nutrition, education, etc., will contribute much to alleviating the worst manifestations of poverty. But much more will need to be done to ensure that a solid economic base is established to meet and sustain the goals for long-term child survival, protection and development.

29. As affirmed by the international community at the eighteenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly (April 1990), a most important challenge for the 1990s is the need for revitalization of economic growth and social development in the developing countries and to address together the problems of abject poverty and hunger that continue to afflict far too many people in the world. As the most vulnerable segment of human society, children have a particular stake in sustained economic growth and alleviation of poverty, without which their well-being cannot be secured.

30. To foster a favourable international economic environment, it is essential to continue to give urgent attention to an early, broad and durable solution to the external debt problems facing developing debtor countries; to mobilize external and domestic resources to meet the increasing needs for development finance of developing countries; to take steps to ensure that the problem of the net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries does not continue in the 1990s and that its impact is effectively addressed; to create a more open and equitable trading system to facilitate the diversification and modernization of the economies of developing countries, particularly those that are commodity-dependent; and to make available substantial concessional resources, particularly for the least developed countries.

31. In all of these efforts the fulfilment of the basic needs of children must receive a high priority. Every possible opportunity should be explored to ensure that programmes benefiting children, women and other vulnerable groups are protected in times of structural adjustments and other economic restructuring. For example, as countries reduce military expenditures, part of the resources released should be channelled to programmes for social and economic development, including those benefiting children. Debt-relief schemes could be formulated in ways that the budget reallocations and renewed economic growth made possible through such schemes would benefit programmes for children. Debt relief for children, including debt swaps for investment in social development programmes, should be considered by debtors and creditors. The international community, including private-sector creditors, are urged to work with developing countries and relevant agencies to support debt relief for children. To match increased efforts by developing countries themselves, the donor countries and international institutions should consider targetting more development assistance to primary health care, basic education, low-cost water and sanitation programmes and other interventions specifically endorsed in the Summit Declaration and this Plan of Action.

32. The international community has recognized the need to stop and reverse the increasing marginalization of the least developed countries, including most countries of sub-Saharan Africa and many land-locked and island countries that face special development problems. These countries will require additional long-term international support to complement their own national efforts to meet the pressing needs of children over the 1990s.

III. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS AND MONITORING

33. Effective implementation of this Plan of Action will require concerted national action and international co-operation. As affirmed in the Declaration, such action and co-operation must be guided by the principle of a "first call for children"—a principle that the essential needs of children should be given high priority in the allocation of resources, in bad times as well as in good times, at national and international as well as at family levels.

34. It is particularly important that the child-specific actions proposed must be pursued as part of strengthening broader national development programmes combining revitalized economic growth, poverty reduction, human resource development and environmental protection. Such programmes must also strengthen community organizations, inculcate civic responsibility and be sensitive to the cultural heritage and social values which support progress without alienation of the younger generation. With these broad objectives in mind, we commit ourselves and our Governments to the following actions:

Action at the national level

(i) All Governments are urged to prepare, before the end of 1991, national programmes of action to implement the commitments undertaken in the World Summit Declaration and this Plan of Action. National Governments should encourage and assist provincial and local governments as well as NGOs, the private sector and civic groups to prepare their own programmes of action to help to implement the goals and objectives included in the Declaration and this Plan of Action;

(ii) Each country is encouraged to re-examine in the context of its national plans, programmes and policies, how it might accord higher priority to programmes for the well-being of children in general, and for meeting over the 1990s the major goals for child survival, development and protection as enumerated in the World Summit Declaration and this Plan of Action;

(iii) Each country is urged to re-examine in the context of its particular national situation, its current national budget, and in the case of donor countries, their development assistance budgets, to ensure that programmes aimed at the achievement of goals for the survival, protection and development of children will have a priority when

resources are allocated. Every effort should be made to ensure that such programmes are protected in times of economic austerity and structural adjustments;

(iv) Families, communities, local governments, NGOs, social, cultural, religious, business and other institutions, including the mass media, are encouraged to play an active role in support of the goals enunciated in this Plan of Action. The experience of the 1980s shows that it is only through the mobilization of all sectors of society, including those that traditionally did not consider child survival, protection and development as their major focus, that significant progress can be achieved in these areas. All forms of social mobilization, including the effective use of the great potential of the new information and communication capacity of the world, should be marshalled to convey to all families the knowledge and skills required for dramatically improving the situation of children;

(v) Each country should establish appropriate mechanisms for the regular and timely collection, analysis and publication of data required to monitor relevant social indicators relating to the well-being of children—such as neonatal, infant and under-5 mortality rates, maternal mortality and fertility rates, nutritional levels, immunization coverage, morbidity rates of diseases of public health importance, school enrolment and achievement and literacy rates—which record the progress being made towards the goals set forth in this Plan of Action and corresponding national plans of action. Statistics should be disaggregated by gender to ensure that any inequitable impact of programmes on girls and women can be monitored and corrected. It is particularly important that mechanisms be established to alert policy makers quickly to any adverse trends to enable timely corrective action. Indicators of human development should be periodically reviewed by national leaders and decision makers, as is currently done with indicators of economic development;

(vi) Each country is urged to re-examine its current arrangements for responding to natural disasters and man-made calamities which often afflict women and children the hardest. Countries that do not have adequate contingency planning for disaster preparedness are urged to establish such plans, seeking support from appropriate international institutions where necessary;

(vii) Progress towards the goals endorsed in the Summit Declaration and this Plan of Action could be further accelerated, and solutions to many other major problems confronting children and families greatly facilitated, through further research and development. Governments, industry and academic institutions are requested to increase their

efforts in both basic and operational research, aimed at new technical and technological breakthroughs, more effective social mobilization and better delivery of existing social services. Prime examples of the areas in which research is urgently needed include, in the field of health, improved vaccination technologies, malaria, AIDS, respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases, nutritional deficiencies, tuberculosis, family planning and care of the newborn. Similarly there are important research needs in the area of early child development, basic education, hygiene and sanitation, and in coping with the trauma facing children who are uprooted from their families and face other particularly difficult circumstances. Such research should involve collaboration among institutions in both the developing and the industrialized countries of the world.

Action at the international level

35. Action at the community and national levels is, of course, of critical importance in meeting the goals and aspirations for children and development. However, many developing countries, particularly the least developed and the most indebted ones, will need substantial international co-operation to enable them to participate effectively in the world-wide effort for child survival, protection and development. Accordingly, the following specific actions are proposed to create an enabling international environment for the implementation of this Plan of Action.

(i) All international development agencies—multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental—are urged to examine how they can contribute to the achievement of the goals and strategies enunciated in the Declaration and this Plan of Action as part of more general attention to human development in the 1990s. They are requested to report their plans and programmes to their respective governing bodies before the end of 1991 and periodically thereafter;

(ii) All regional institutions, including regional political and economic organizations, are requested to include consideration of the Declaration and this Plan of Action on the agenda of their meetings, including at the highest political level, with a view to developing agreements for mutual collaboration for implementation and ongoing monitoring;

(iii) Full co-operation and collaboration of all relevant United Nations agencies and organs as well as other international institutions are requested in ensuring the achievement of the goals and objectives of the national plans envisaged in the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action. The governing bodies of all concerned agencies are requested to ensure that within their mandates the fullest possible support is given by these agencies for the achievement of these goals;

(iv) The assistance of the United Nations is requested to institute appropriate mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of this Plan of Action, using existing expertise of the relevant United Nations statistical offices, the specialized agencies, UNICEF and other United Nations organs. Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to arrange for a mid-decade review, at all appropriate levels, of the progress being made towards implementing the commitments of the Declaration and Plan of Action;

(v) As the world's lead agency for children, the United Nations Children's Fund is requested to prepare, in close collaboration with the relevant specialized agencies and other United Nations organs, a consolidated analysis of the plans and actions undertaken by individual countries and the international community in support of the child-related development goals for the 1990s. The governing bodies of the relevant specialized agencies and United Nations organs are requested to include a periodic review of the implementation of the Declaration and this Plan of Action at their regular sessions and to keep the General Assembly of the United Nations, through the Economic and Social Council, fully informed of progress to date and additional action required during the decade ahead.

36. The goals enunciated in the Declaration and this Plan of Action are ambitious and the commitments required to implement them will demand consistent and extraordinary effort on the part of all concerned. Fortunately, the necessary knowledge and techniques for reaching most of the goals already exist. The financial resources required are modest in relation to the great achievements that beckon. And the most essential factor—the provision to families of the information and services necessary to protect their children—is now within reach in every country and for virtually every community. There is no cause which merits a higher priority than the protection and development of children, on whom the survival, stability and advancement of all nations—and, indeed, of human civilization—depends. Full implementation of the Declaration and this Plan of Action must therefore be accorded a high priority for national action and international co-operation.

Appendix

GOALS FOR CHILDREN AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990s

The following goals have been formulated through extensive consultation in various international forums attended by virtually all Governments, the relevant United Nations agencies including the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and a large number of NGOs. These goals are recommended for implementation by all countries where they are applicable, with appropriate adaptation to the specific situation of each country in terms of phasing, standards, priorities and availability of resources, with respect for cultural, religious and social traditions. Additional goals that are particularly relevant to a country's specific situation should be added in its national plan of action.

I. MAJOR GOALS FOR CHILD SURVIVAL, DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION

(a) Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of infant and under-5 child mortality rate by one third or to 50 and 70 per 1,000 live births respectively, whichever is less;

(b) Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of maternal mortality rate by half;

(c) Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half;

(d) Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal;

(e) By the year 2000, universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children;

(f) Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level with emphasis on female literacy;

(g) Improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances.

II. SUPPORTING/SECTORAL GOALS

A. Women's health and education

(i) Special attention to the health and nutrition of the female child and to pregnant and lactating women;

(ii) Access by all couples to information and services to prevent pregnancies that are too early, too closely spaced, too late or too many;

(iii) Access by all pregnant women to pre-natal care, trained attendants during childbirth and referral facilities for high-risk pregnancies and obstetric emergencies;

(iv) Universal access to primary education with special emphasis for girls and accelerated literacy programmes for women.

B. Nutrition

(i) Reduction in severe, as well as moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half of 1990 levels;

(ii) Reduction of the rate of low birth weight (2.5 kg or less) to less than 10 per cent;

(iii) Reduction of iron deficiency anaemia in women by one third of the 1990 levels;

(iv) Virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders;

(v) Virtual elimination of vitamin A deficiency and its consequences, including blindness;

(vi) Empowerment of all women to breast-feed their children exclusively for four to six months and to continue breast-feeding, with complementary food, well into the second year;

(vii) Growth promotion and its regular monitoring to be institutionalized in all countries by the end of the 1990s;

(viii) Dissemination of knowledge and supporting services to increase food production to ensure household food security.

C. Child health

(i) Global eradication of poliomyelitis by the year 2000;

(ii) Elimination of neonatal tetanus by 1995;

(iii) Reduction by 95 per cent in measles deaths and reduction by 90 per cent of measles cases compared to pre-immunization levels by 1995, as a major step to the global eradication of measles in the longer run;

(iv) Maintenance of a high level of immunization coverage (at least 90 per cent of children under one year of age by the year 2000) against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis and against tetanus for women of child-bearing age;

(v) Reduction by 50 per cent in the deaths due to diarrhoea in children under the age of five years and 25 per cent reduction in the diarrhoea incidence rate;

(vi) Reduction by one third in the deaths due to acute respiratory infections in children under five years.

D. Water and sanitation

(i) Universal access to safe drinking water;

(ii) Universal access to sanitary means of excreta disposal;

(iii) Elimination of guinea-worm disease (dracunculiasis) by the year 2000.

E. Basic education

(i) Expansion of early childhood development activities, including appropriate low-cost family- and community-based interventions;

(ii) Universal access to basic education, and achievement of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children through formal schooling or non-formal education of comparable learning standard, with emphasis on reducing the current disparities between boys and girls;

(iii) Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on female literacy;

(iv) Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living, made available through all educational channels, including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication and social action, with effectiveness measured in terms of behavioural change.

F. Children in difficult circumstances

Provide improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances and tackle the root causes leading to such situations.

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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Letter dated 8 October 1990 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

A new massacre is taking place at this very moment against the Palestinian people in occupied Jerusalem by the Israeli occupation forces. The Israeli occupation forces together with the Israeli settlers attacked with machine guns the Palestinian masses inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque this morning and killed 21 persons and wounded 600 others. The massacre is going on until this moment (1.30 p.m. Geneva time). The Israeli occupation forces have also arrested Mr. Faisal Husseini inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Moreover, Israeli helicopters fired tear-gas bombs inside the Al-Makassed hospital in Jerusalem, which led to the evacuation of pregnant women from the hospital to avoid miscarriages.

This massacre perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinians comes only a few days after a previous massacre which took place inside the Al-Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip on 21 September 1990, when the Israeli forces killed and wounded 180 Palestinians and destroyed 57 houses and shops and arrested hundreds of the inhabitants of the camp.

These continuous massacres which are perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people in the Palestinian occupied territories show once more the flagrant disregard by the Israeli forces of the principles of international law and United Nations resolutions, as well as the intention of Israel to continue its violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the principles of international humanitarian law.

We, hereby, request you to consider this memorandum as an official document of the Commission on Human Rights at its Forty-seventh Session.

(signed) Nabil RAMLAWI
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the
United Nations Office at Geneva

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Letter dated 30 October 1990 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

While the blood had not yet dried from the 31 Palestinian martyrs and hundreds of wounded who were hit by the bullets of the Israeli occupation forces in the esplanade of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on 8 October 1990, the Israeli occupation forces committed another massacre in the Palestinian refugee camp of the city of Rafah on 18 October 1990. On that date, the Israeli occupation forces opened fire with automatic weapons and using live ammunition against camp residents, indiscriminately wounding 55 Palestinian citizens, after which a curfew was imposed on the towns and camps of the Gaza Strip. As the world received the news of this series of massacres with astonishment and condemnation, and only one day after the Rafah massacre, the occupation forces committed another massacre in the town and camp of Khan Yunis when they opened fire in the same indiscriminate manner with automatic weapons against demonstrators on 19 October 1990. As a result, 98 citizens were killed or wounded with live ammunition and 150 were wounded through use of metallic/rubber bullets, brutal beatings, as well as suffocation and convulsions induced by poisonous gases and alien substances dropped from above by Israeli helicopters. Medical sources in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) clinic in Khan Yunis affirmed that in addition to poisonous gases, Israeli forces this time also employed a substance that induces convulsions and hysteria among those affected by it.

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These massacres take place in a systematic and planned fashion to confirm the unchanged policy of the Israeli occupation authorities which is reflected in the daily practices of wilful murder of Palestinian citizens, aborting of pregnant women, and administrative detention and torture in prisons and detention centres, in addition to imposition of collective punishments including curfews and sieges against towns, villages and camps, closure of schools and universities, destruction of houses, uprooting of olive and citrus trees, expropriation of land and water, building of settlements, and planning to expel citizens from their homeland. It is not necessary to prove that any one of these actions constitutes a violation of the principles of human rights and international law, and that together, and in view of their continuity over 23 years, they provide indisputable proof of the existence of a pre-determination to commit such acts. This continuity also points to the high number of victims and the exceedingly dangerous nature of these acts, which are crimes of war and crimes against humanity in light of the provisions of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the two International Covenants on Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The Palestinian people are victims of these crimes because they are under Israeli military occupation. They continue to hope that the international community will shoulder its responsibilities towards the dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and will undertake to protect this people, their properties and their lands, until such time as they can expel the Israeli occupation from the land of Palestine and as they are enabled to exercise their inalienable national rights on their land according to the principles of international law and legitimacy as represented in the provisions of the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations on this subject. Until this goal is achieved, the Commission on Human Rights, the other special committees seized with practices by Israel which affect human rights, the international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned with this issue are called upon to work towards that aim in the context of their humanitarian duties. Every effort in this direction constitutes an essential ingredient to building a just peace in a region which today faces its most critical threat to international peace and security owing to Israeli practices which give no weight to international legitimacy, to the principles of international law or to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

We, hereby, request you to consider this memorandum as an official document of the coming session of the Commission on Human Rights.

(signed) Nabil RAMLAWI
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the
United Nations Office at Geneva

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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Letter dated 27 November 1990 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

1. The Israeli occupation authorities have arrested two children, Zafer Farid Attawil, aged 14, and Ala' Salah Warrad, also aged 14, from Al-Nuri sector of Jerusalem, and, on 18 November 1990, have extended their detention.

2. During their arrest, the two children were severely beaten by the Israeli occupation authorities and one of them, Ala' Salah Warrad, had to be transferred to an Israeli hospital due to the beatings.

3. This crime against the Palestinian children in the occupied territories stresses the contents of international reports on arrest, torture and killing of children by the Israeli occupation authorities, and particularly the reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council and the reports of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

4. Moreover, these facts renew the assertion that, unless the Israeli occupation authorities withdraw from the Palestinian Occupied Territories, or unless, pending this withdrawal, the international community secures international protection of the Palestinian people under occupation, such crimes will continue against our people, crimes which continuously violate the principles of international law, of international humanitarian law as well as the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

5. We, hereby, kindly request you to take the necessary measures to distribute this memorandum as an official document of the next session of the Commission on Human Rights.

(Signed) Nabil RAMLAWI
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the
United Nations Office at Geneva

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